Feb. 13th A.D. 1841. Theol. Hall Canonsburg Penn.

Washington Co. Pa.

Dear Brethren;

Your kind letter, dated Jany 26th has been received, and your proposal to open a correspondence meets with our warmest approbation. We are not ignorant that our Church is regarded by some as peculiarly *reserved*, as being a people by themselves, carefully avoiding any contact with other churches. That there is *some* ground for the charge we freely, and frankly confess, that it is at all a *general feature*, we can not admit; and even if it were, one thing is certain, such a *selfish* spirit meets with our unequivocal condemnation. The Spirit of the Gospel, is *universal* love — love to God, and love to man. And the true christian instead of attempting to widen the breaches of Zion, should mourn over them, and use all his efforts to heal them; and under whatever garb, he may meet a follower of the meek and lowly Saviour, he should give him a *hearty welcome*. Although the church of Christ is divided into fragments, still it constitutes but *one* church, "My love, my undefiled is but one". "We have *one* Lord *one* faith, *one* baptism". We profess to love the same Savior — we are bound for the same Heaven — we have in view the same great object — the glory of God and the Salvation of men. It would rejoice our hearts, Dear Brethren to see Christians loving one another *more*. This is our Savior's command that we love one another". And it is given as a test of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." God is love, and Heaven is made up of love. To see the followers of Jesus, arrayed against each other in unhappy, and oftentimes *unholy* war. To see those energies which were given to *evangelize the world*, *wasted*, and thrown away in unhappy contentions, is indeed matter of lamentation, and affords sad evidence of a departed Lord and a departed glory. But things will not last *forever*. God has promised that "Zion shall be one stick in his hand" — that the watchmen on her walls, shall see eye to eye, and with a voice *together* sing". So that while we drop a tear for the past, and mourn over the present divisions of the church, hope paints her bow of promise in the sky of the future. The clouds we think are already beginning to break, and we can now discern faint glimmerings of the light that is soon to burst upon us. The time we think, and fondly hope will soon come, when we shall sit together at the same Communion table — fight the battles of the Lord under the same standard — present to the enemy, *one undivided front* — *one unbroken* phalanx, when the church shall be in truth "terrible to her enemies as an army with banners."

To your interrogatories, as far as we are capable of giving information we respond with pleasure. There is nothing in our church, that we wish or care to conceal. Her faults may be touched by any hand, only let it be guided by christian love — and let her be shielded from injustice by that "charity" that "thinketh no evil", and when we know her defects, we shall be the first to pronounce the censure. And whatever the evil may be, we shall labour in "season and out of season", in God's strength for its removal. You ask, what has our church done in the missionary field? In *foreign* missions we have done *nothing*. We use the term unqualified. And while we say it, we blush deep for her criminal apathy. It is surely no honor for a church of Christ to neglect her masters commission; for labourers in the moral vineyard of Christ to be standing *idle*, while the fields are "already white to the harvest". Look to the primitive ages of the church. From the conduct of the first christians, our church receives a *burning rebuke*, In the execution of their work, death confronted them at every step — Persecution brought forth all her implements of terror and torture, and planted them full in their path. Still they pressed forward until a few unlettered fishermen had almost brought the world into the subjection to the gospel of Christ. They almost took it by surprise. City after city — province after province capitulated to these fearless soldiers of Jesus. 1800 years have past — has the object for which the gospel was sent into the world been realized? Has its great object succeeded? Alas! the very question seems asked in *mockery*. Instead of the "kingdoms of this world being the kingdoms of our Lord and of his christ" — instead of the church holding the world *tributary*, and leaving their trophies on a hundred battle-fields — thousands of her soldiers are still lying at home *inactive*, and have never yet fought a single campaign. Instead of the church conquering the *world*, it seems as if the *world* would conquer the church. The spirit of the world is feeding on the very vitals of religion — chilling the hearts of christians — and freezing up all the streams of benevolence. In your church Dear Brethren, we are aware that its influence is not so deeply felt — But in ours it seems almost to have thrown around us the coldness of death — It has brought upon us a temperature in religion in which every thing *freezes*. Perhaps it is owing to this cause more than any other, that our church has not *moved* in the great cause of missions. We "seek our own things and not the things of Christ" — A world is sinking down into eternal death, and their imploring cry for help comes to us on every breeze — but the influence of the world stands up like a *wall of ice* between us and them — Not one missionary of the cross from our church makes known to the *perishing Heathen* the "riches of the grace of God" In midst of a famishing world we have established a *monopoly* of the bread of life. At the meeting of our Synod in 1839. They resolved to establish a *foreign missionary fund*, and ordered their ministers to lay its ~~befor~~ claims before the church, and procure from their congregations contributions. At the time $80,00 were deposited in this fund from a foreign Missionary Society. This seemed like the kindling of hope. At the last Synod they had all "with one consent" forgotten it — Not a single whisper ~~for~~ none had attended to the call. So the ~~little~~ embers neglected sunk into ashes — without one generous heart to fan ~~them~~ them into a little flame. We are going to memorialize the coming Synod in May, and we cherish the hope that they will then take *definite action* on the subject. Some of our ministers and people are indeed opposed to *foreign* missions at the present time — and to what extent this opinion prevails we are not precisely able to state — But we think, but few are *openly*, and *determinedly opposed*. The greater part are either *ignorant* on the subject, or entirely *indifferent*. To most of our people the calls of the perishing heathen have never been presented. And when they do not *know*, as a matter of course they can neither *feel* or *act*. *Light* always precedes correct action — The light is to some extent in possession of our ministers, but it seems to be all *absorbed*, and none *reflected* — — It is strongly objected by some in our church — that to Evangelize the world, the church of Christ must act as a *whole*, and that it is wrong for the branches of this church to send missionaries while it remains in its present divided State. This objection comes with peculiarly ill grace from men, who are making no efforts to heal the church's divisions. The church may continue to act at home, why not abroad. The action is the same - the only difference is place, what powers are sufficient for the one, certainly are for the other. If each branch of the Church is a complete fully organized Church, and can act at all - it can most certainly act one place as well as another - Others object that we have not men and means to spare. This is our home - our country - our church - but the dying heathen are strangers, away beyond the ocean. Under such cold - narrow, shrivelled up ideas - the last glimmering spark of benevolence ~~the~~ is quenched - trodden out. It is not true. The world is our home - and every country is our Country. We are to be embasadors not sent here or there, but to the world. We have both men and means. but we want the will. Some of our Students are now willing to say "here am I - send me" - Here are the men - The means are rusting in our coffers. Listen to the piercing cry of Millions famishing on the transatlantic coasts - in the Siberian wilds and on the plains of Hindostan - From the world of China with her myriads "going down to the chambers of death" comes the spirit stirring voice! The same voice is wafted by the winds that fan the plains of Palestine. From New Holland too, where the man is anihilated - the fires of the immortal mind trod out - from the isles of every sea - from the kingdoms of every land that voice comes to our ears, Oh! shall it never reach our hearts. But pardon us - On this part of the subject we have dwelt too long. ——— You ask again, what our church is doing in the domestic field? Surely men, who are all for home, are at least active there. Here again the blush of shame should be our silent response. Home and foreign missions are united by a golden chain. The same Spirit that chills the one - freezes the other - they breathe the same air. - Home missionary men are foreign missionary men. Our church has a little mission to Upper Canada - and our probationers in the far west are sometimes supported in part out of Synods funds. Our church is doing nothing in the domestic field at all proportioned to her ability. We have indeed numerous vacancies in our church for which we can not furnish an adequate supply, a difficulty, which furnishes some apology for our inaction. But from these vacancies are deeply neglected by our settled ministers. The dews of Heaven are not, indeed, as we could wish wattering our church even at home - For the desert-sand that drinks in the plentiful showers of rain - and permits none to flow off in reviving streams - still presents the same unvaried sterility. We furnish a living example of the fulfillment of the words of inspiration "There is a withholding that tendeth to poverty" — There are, indeed some men in the world, who would almost "coin their blood into gold - and sell their souls for gain" - but such a selfish

Spirit but ill becomes the Christian. What an inviting field at home for all our greatest exertions! — The coloured people of the South made heathens in a christian land — the great "valley of the Mississippi" fast filling up with the tide of Catholic emigration — their minds enslaved — the bible closed — Canada — the bleak hills of the North — call for our aid — And the far West — stretching away to the setting Sun — where the wild Indians — their souls bleeding from unnumbered wrongs — and even recent outrages roam through its unbroken forest. — — Shall their cry for help from our church never meet a response. — As to the State of religion in our church we would speak with diffidence —

We feel too much the want of true religion in our own hearts And Oh! that God would kindle up afresh the flame of love — and quicken us to redoubled exertions! — But one thing is certain — there is no great moving in our church — The Spirit is not acting by as visible manifestations as in times of reviving and reformation. But still we hope the good work is going on by its silent invisible operations — And we think we can now see the dawning of a brighter day — We have 25 Students of Theology — — a number far unequal to the wants of our church — and a shame to the cold hearted indifference of our ministers — Our Session begins with November — And ends the 3rd Tuesday of March. — Most of the Students are members of our society and correct on the subject

of Missions. The first monday of every month we have a prayer meeting for the heathen. We would be pleased, to know of you in turn how many you have labouring in the missionary field? and with what success? and what your church is doing in other kindred benevolent enterprises &c — And now dear Brethren our prayers unite with yours that "Christ's kingdom may come" — that the churches divisions may be healed — and every obstacle broken down to the extension of the gospel &c — then shall the tabernacle of God be with men." "God will bless us and all nations shall call him [illegible] powers in the [illegible]

Please, write as soon as convenient.

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The Society of Inquiry of the
Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Princeton
New Jersey

CANONSBURG PA.
Feb
23

Rec'd. March 1st 1841